

# DAILY BULLETIN

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## HUMAN RIGHTS MUST BE PROTECTED BY RULE OF LAW, KIRKPATRICK SAYS

U.S. delegate addresses Commission on Human Rights

Human rights must be protected by the rule of law or they will be trampled by despots, says Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, head of the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights meeting in Geneva.

Addressing the 53-member body March 18, Kirkpatrick said the commission “has a solemn obligation” to keep constantly in mind the suffering and aspirations of the victims of the worst human rights abuses. She said it “can give encouragement to those who live on the edge of despair” and who regard it as “their best hope for release from the wrongs they suffer and redress for their cruel situations.”

Following is the text of her remarks, as delivered.

It is an honor to greet the distinguished delegates to the Fifty-Ninth Session of the Commission on Human Rights; its Chairperson, whose call for an end to violence against women was most welcome; and the new High Commissioner for Human Rights whose emphasis on the rule of law is vitally important, since human rights can only prevail where and when the rule of law prevails. And of course, we should never forget that the rule of law consists not only in the articulation of general rules but also in the habitual compliance of people and the reliable enforcement by governments of those rules.

The United States government and the American people have had a high regard for this Commission which was founded to promote and preserve human rights. Successive U.S. administrations have worked with dedication to realize its vision and achieve its purposes. Much remains to be done.

Our delegation, our government, and the American people believe that the Human Rights Commission should and can make a vital contribution to the improvement of the daily lives of those who suffer under oppressive governments. It can assist those working to make the transition from non-democratic to democratic governments. It can offer encouragement and help to those seeking to enlarge the freedom and well-being they already enjoy.

We believe the Commission on Human Rights has a solemn obligation to keep constantly in mind the suffering and the aspirations of the victims of the worst human rights abuses. This Commission can give encouragement to those who live on the edge of despair and who regard this body -that is, us - as their best hope for release from the wrongs they suffer and redress for their cruel situations. The United States seeks to work with other members of the Commission to assist in providing the support and the services it is uniquely qualified to contribute. Advisory services provided through the Commission to governments that seek to improve the rights of their citizens can help. Special Rapporteurs mandated by the Commission can help. Our combined knowledge of specific human rights abuses can help to pierce the veil of secrecy and denial, and shine a ray of light into the torturers' cell.

We believe this Commission has a solemn duty to speak for those who are denied the right to speak for themselves. For this and related reasons, the United States welcomes the initiative of the High Commissioner in proposing to restructure and decentralize his office and its operations. We encourage his plans to improve the services of his office and to create strong national protections for human rights - without undertaking activities outside his mandate.

The American people have high and exacting expectations about what this Commission should be and do. We believe the expectations and hopes of Americans about the Commission on Human Rights are similar to those of people around the globe. We think all knowledgeable people want the Commission to be a positive force in establishing high standards for respecting human rights everywhere - and for progress in realizing those estab-

lished in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We think all people want the Commission to utilize those standards as they examine the performance of governments.

Why do we want this? For the United States it is a matter of self-interest and also of national interest. Why should it be a matter of national policy to assert that all human beings are born free and equal in inherent rights and human dignity? Why should we care that everyone has a right to life, liberty and security of person that is respected by his government, that no one should be subjected to arbitrary or brutal intrusions into his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to mendacious attacks on his honor or reputation? Why do we believe that everyone has the right to freedom of thought, speech, conscience, religion, including the right to change his religion or teach it to others?

We believe in these principles because they are the principles on which the United States of America was founded, and by which we have lived and thrived. We believe they are right for individuals and right for states.

Like the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we believe that, and I quote,: "Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind....Whereas it is essential, if man is not to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law...." In fact, it is clear that human rights must be protected by the rule of law or they will be trampled by despots. Once it was believed that respect for the rule of law could exist only in homogenous societies, but we know now that it can thrive in diversity.

The Brazilian delegate described yesterday the broad ethnic, racial, and social diversity of his huge country. The United States is also diverse, almost beyond imagination. Virtually every country in the Americas is a new nation, a new mixture of persons of diverse origins who have created and are still creating new political communities.

In the effort to forge unity out of diversity, the United States' founding fathers wrote in our Declaration of Independence a creed which resonates today as in 1776. They wrote: "We hold these truths to be self evident. That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. "To secure these rights, governments are instituted among

men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....”

Our Declaration states a dream and a doctrine of government by consent. An important part of the history of the United States has been devoted to making a reality of this dream for all Americans. As the world has shrunk, we have sought to share the dream beyond our borders.

For the United States, the enjoyment and protection of the rights stipulated in our Declaration of Independence and institutionalized in our Constitution lie at the heart of our identity as a nation. The struggle to ensure that those rights are respected by each and every one of our citizens -- a struggle that is still in progress -- has been the engine of our history and our development as a nation.

Some of your nations have long and rich histories, many much longer than ours in the Americas. Our friends and allies in Europe have developed and shed numerous political systems. Our friends and allies in Asia and Africa live in cultures that reach back for millennia. The aspirations and concepts that underlie modern human rights doctrine are present in many of the world's major cultural traditions. That is precisely why -- when the United Nations was founded -- its planners conceived a Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The drafters of the Universal Declaration saw all human beings as part of a family - all brothers [and sisters]. They saw the human family as being broken up into societies and nations with different values, beliefs, economic and political systems. But the unifying principles which make the human family a family is the universal desire to enjoy these rights as set forth in the Universal Declaration. We believe that peace, security and prosperity flow from respect for these rights and from their enjoyment by all.

There have been remarkable changes in the world and in the UN since I was privileged to represent the United States in a UN body. As I look around this room today, I see representatives of countries who were formerly not members because they did not enjoy independence and self-determination, who today are democracies with dramatically expanded rights. And I congratulate them.

Many do not believe that the Commission on Human Rights has kept pace with the sweeping changes that have occurred in the world in recent years. As a result, the Commission is fairly strongly criticized.

Some criticism aimed at the Commission overlooks positive steps taken in recent sessions, but the widespread overall impression shared by many is that too many serious and systematic abuses of human rights go unchallenged or even covered-up in this body. The practice of electing the Commission members from some of the world's worst human rights offenders is especially serious. The cynical resort to procedural tactics to avoid taking a position on human rights abuses has not gone unnoticed and is widely and rightly criticized.

The government and the people whom I have the privilege of representing want the Commission to keep the faith placed in it by the United Nations' founders when they envisioned the prospect of a body devoted to the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights. We must not forget that human rights can be realized only through good faith compliance and enforcement by governments and complemented by the sustained vigilance of a civil society acting to ensure compliance.

We want the Commission to be a forum where, despite the differences in our cultures, political systems, and national experience, we can work together to secure human rights for all. Promoting, protecting, extending and championing these rights is worthy of our very best effort.

Thank you.

## WHITE HOUSE STILL HOPES SADDAM HUSSEIN WILL CHOOSE EXILE

Bush speaks by phone with the presidents of Russia and China

By Wendy S. Ross and Alicia Langley  
Washington File White House Correspondents

Washington -- The White House said March 18 it still hopes that Iraq's Saddam Hussein will take seriously President Bush's ultimatum and leave Iraq voluntarily so that Iraq can be disarmed peacefully of its weapons of mass destruction.

If the Iraqi dictator were to go into exile, there is the hope that coalition forces would be able to enter Iraq peacefully "because Iraqi military would not be under

orders to attack or fire back,” White House Press Secretary Ari Fleischer told reporters.

The president “knows that the chances are slim, that Saddam Hussein will leave,” but he continues to hope that he will, Fleischer said.

But whether he leaves or not, “the bottom line is a coalition of the willing will disarm Saddam Hussein’s Iraq no matter what,” said Fleischer.

Bush, in an internationally televised address from the White House the evening of March 17, gave the Iraqi leader and his two sons a 48-hour ultimatum to leave Iraq or face military action. “The clock began counting at 8 o’clock p.m. Eastern time last night,” Fleischer said. “Saddam knows what he needs to do.”

But news reports say the Saddam Hussein regime rejected the U.S. demands in a statement broadcast on Iraqi television.

Asked if this means that allied military action could now begin before 48 hours, Fleischer said:

“Let me make two points: One, Saddam Hussein has led Iraq to many mistakes in the past, principally by developing weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein, if he doesn’t leave the country, will make his final mistake. The president continues to hope he will.

“On the question of timing, anything involving timing I will refer to the Pentagon.”

Fleischer reminded reporters “that the president’s words in his speech were ‘a time of our choosing’” for the start of military action. “That’s how the president expressed it,” he said.

But Fleischer reminded reporters that the deadline was also intended to allow innocent civilians to flee. “The president, as he promised in his news conference, wanted to give a sufficient time period for others to get out of the country.”

“Publicly, there have been a number of neighboring nations who have suggested that” the Iraqi leader leave, Fleischer said. “We believe that if he wants to leave he would be able to.”

President Bush, Fleischer said, “is very, very focused. The president, having worked on this issue for such a considerable period of time, pursued the diplomacy with the diligence and the importance that the diplomacy deserved, believes now and is comfortable now with the fact that the moment of truth has come.

“And the president believes in his heart that to preserve peace around the world, Saddam Hussein must be disarmed. And he is comfortable with the action that is pending, and is confident that it will achieve its goal. He is, I think, rather serious these days about that, focused and determined to achieve that mission, and he’s comfortable with it.”

Asked how many countries will join with the United States in the pending action, Fleischer said in terms of actual, active combat, there would be very few countries, but “it will be a rather large number” -- some 30 countries -- who will provide basing, overflight rights and supplies.

“Not every nation has the ability to contribute; not every nation is in an area that is geographically advantageous concerning military operations or overflight or basing,” he explained. “So, I think it depends significantly on the ability of these nations to contribute to a coalition.”

Asked about a March 18 statement by French Ambassador to the United States Jean-David Levitte that if Saddam Hussein were to use chemical and biological weapons, “it would change completely the situation... and President Chirac will have to decide what we will do to help the American troops to confront this new situation,” Fleischer said, “One, I thought it was a notable statement. Two, let us hope it never has to come to pass.”

Detailing the President’s activities for the day, Fleischer said Bush met with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to discuss military operations. He also met with other Cabinet officials, had some domestic policy briefings, and continued making phone calls -- both to coalition members and those who will not be part of the coalition.

President Bush began his morning with a phone call to President Vladimir Putin of Russia, Fleischer said. “They discussed the situation in Iraq. They underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation, despite the disagreements the United States and Russia have over the situation in Iraq. And President Putin reiterated to President

Bush his invitation to visit St. Petersburg at the end of May.”

Fleischer said Bush and Putin “openly acknowledged that they don’t see eye-to-eye on whether or not force should be used to disarm Saddam Hussein. They agree about threats in the region, but it’s no secret that they don’t see eye-to-eye on whether the use of force is a required remedy to make Saddam Hussein disarm. But the two of them in the phone call did stress to each other the importance of maintaining good U.S.-Russia relations, and they both expressed confidence that it would, indeed, happen.”

President Bush also this morning called to congratulate Hu Jintao on becoming China’s president. “President Bush and President Hu agreed on the importance of good U.S.-China relations for the advancement of bilateral interests and international peace and stability,” said Fleischer. “The presidents shared views on Iraq and North Korea. President Bush expressed appreciation for Beijing’s efforts to help resolve the North Korean issue peacefully. President Bush also reiterated his administration’s commitment to a one-China policy.”

#### USAID PLANNING IRAQ HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Assembling largest-ever U.S. rapid response team, agency says

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has assembled the largest-ever U.S. humanitarian rapid response team to assist the people of Iraq in the wake of military action in that country, according to a February 24 USAID press release.

The aid agency has placed in the Iraq region stockpiles of emergency supplies and commodities for the Iraq people, the release said.

USAID personnel have been meeting with U.S.-based and international organizations to coordinate a humanitarian response in Iraq, according to the release. It said the response would deal with problems of health and medicines; water and sanitation; food and nutrition; shelter; internally displaced persons; and infrastructure.

Following is the text of USAID’s press release:

#### USAID Contingency Plans for Humanitarian Assistance to Iraq

February 24, 2003

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is fully prepared to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Iraq -- to save lives, alleviate suffering, and mitigate the impact of emergency situations. For the last several months, USAID, working in close coordination with the Department of State and other U.S. agencies, has planned for a possible humanitarian emergency by:

- Assembling and training the largest-ever U.S. humanitarian rapid response team;
- Pre-positioning stockpiles of emergency supplies and commodities; and
- Communicating and coordinating with U.S. and international humanitarian organizations.

**Rapid Response.** USAID has recruited and trained the largest Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in U.S. history, outside of an Urban Search and Rescue response. It will be headquartered in Kuwait City and have three mobile field offices. The DART is comprised of more than 60 humanitarian response experts from USAID; the Department of State’s Bureau for Population, Migration, and Refugees; and the Department of Health and Human Service’s Public Health Service. In addition to technical experts in areas such as health, food, water, and shelter, the DART has statutory grant making authority and includes administrative officers in logistics, transportation, and procurement, enabling the team to function as a turnkey response mechanism for assessment and funding in the field.

**Commodities.** USAID is pre-positioning emergency supplies for the Iraqi people, including materiel in warehouses throughout the region. In addition to pre-positioned and in-transit food, these supplies include wool blankets, rolls of plastic sheeting for emergency shelter, personal hygiene kits, World Health Organization Emergency Health Kits, and water jugs, bladders, containers, and treatment units.

**Coordination.** USAID’s leadership has met for several months with a wide range of U.S.-based and international

al organizations planning for a humanitarian response in Iraq. In the region, the DART will continue to serve as a central point of contact for U.S. Government humanitarian operations, facilitating the exchange of information, and assisting in the coordination of humanitarian assistance among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), U.N. agencies, international organizations (IOs), and the U.S. military. USAID fully supports the United Nations mandate for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. USAID has funded a significant contingency coordination effort for many NGOs preparing to assist in Iraq called the Joint NGO Emergency Preparedness Initiative (JNEPI), offering support to their assessment, logistics, stockpiling, and staffing needs.

#### Focusing on Areas of Greatest Need.

USAID's areas of expertise and responsibility for humanitarian assistance include:

-- Health and medicines -- Shelter and supplies -- Water and sanitation -- Internally displaced persons -- Food and nutrition -- Humanitarian assistance infrastructure

Health and medicines. Through technical assessments, pre-positioned supplies, and the ability for immediate response, USAID will ensure the essential basic healthcare needs of the Iraqi people are met. Goals include:

-- Assessing local health infrastructure, including facilities, medicine availability, and immunization rates.

-- Preventing excess morbidity and mortality by focusing on preventative and primary healthcare. Expediting funding for UN agencies, IOs, and NGOs.

-- Assisting in the establishment of a national Health Information System (HIS) platform.

Water and sanitation. A successful emergency response requires adequate levels of potable water, and sanitary waste disposal and wastewater removal systems. Other goals include:

-- Overall damage assessment of water and sanitation facilities that reach all major populations centers.

-- Immediate assessment and response to provide adequate supplies of potable water.

-- Extensive coordination with, and expedited funding to, water and sanitation experts and organizations.

Food and nutrition. It is estimated that 60 percent of the Iraqi people currently rely on food aid, and that households have an average of one month of food stocks. USAID will:

-- Ensure the nutritional needs of the population are met through food availability and distribution.

-- Work with international organizations to maintain the countrywide ration system on an emergency basis and support internally displaced persons.

Shelter and supplies. The emergency response will include:

-- Meeting the emergency shelter needs of vulnerable populations through the provision of pre-positioned plastic sheeting and tents.

-- Expediting funding to the U.N. and NGOs to meet basic shelter needs for vulnerable populations.

Internally-displaced persons (IDPs). Meeting basic humanitarian needs and limiting sickness and death will be the primary focus for newly displaced populations. This will include:

-- Ensuring access to healthcare, clean water, nutrition programs, and shelter.

-- Expediting funding to the U.N., IOs, and NGOs to establish and manage displaced population camps.

-- Creating conditions that enable the return of IDPs to places of origin.

Humanitarian assistance infrastructure. Emergency interventions and high-impact projects will be used to facilitate humanitarian access and program implementation. This will include:

-- Monitoring the physical transportation infrastructure to ensure access to populations in need.

-- Contracting transportation to move and distribute supplies.

-- Communicating with vulnerable populations regarding the availability and location of assistance.

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